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## JUNE MEETING.

THE stated meeting was held on Thursday, the 10th instant, at three o'clock, P. M., the PRESIDENT, Mr. LODGE, in the chair.

The record of the last meeting was read and approved.

The Librarian reported the list of donors to the Library since the last meeting.

The Cabinet-Keeper reported that Miss Ellen Susan Bulfinch, a granddaughter and biographer of Charles Bulfinch, architect, places on deposit a portrait of Stephen Greenleaf (1705-1795), Sheriff of Suffolk, by John Smibert; and a portrait of Charles Bulfinch by Mather Brown.

He also reported the following gifts to the Cabinet: a portrait of Rev. Joshua Huntington (1786-1819), from the heirs of John C. Phillips; an engraved caricature of a fop, or "macaroni," published in London in 1773, from the estate of Edward H. Hall; two lithographs, Harrison Avenue Congregational Church, and the Iron Light House on Minot's Rock which was destroyed by a great storm on April 16, 1851, from Mrs. Elizabeth S. Barry; and several medals, store cards and coins, from Mrs. Charles F. Richardson, the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Mrs. Roland C. Lincoln, and Miss Mary C. Pratt of Plymouth; also a bronze medal of the Jamestown Tercentennial Exposition, 1907, in commemoration of the first permanent settlement of English speaking people in America awarded to Arthur Lord, Commissioner from Massachusetts, from Mr. Lord.

The Editor reported a gift from Mrs. Thomas R. Watson, of Cambridge, of manuscripts chiefly correspondence of the Watson-Goodwin family, and containing some early papers on colonial and Revolutionary matters.

From Mrs. George B. Parkinson, of South Lincoln, manuscripts and printed issues of the eighteenth century.

From Andrew McFarland Davis, a volume of Belknap's

*History of New Hampshire*, enriched by many manuscript annotations by Charles Deane.

Robert Grant, of Boston, was elected a Resident Member of the Society.

Mr. BIGELOW, in a few remarks, presented to the Society, in commemoration of the seven hundredth anniversary of the Magna Charta, June 15, 1915, a piece of wood from the Magna Charta tree, which was cut down in 1880. This relic was given to Mr. Bigelow a day or two later by the wife of the tenant.

Mr. SANBORN spoke on the Weare Papers, the sale of which has been enjoined by the State of New Hampshire.

Mr. WATERS read a paper on

#### AN EPISODE OF THE WAR OF 1812.

"Madison's War," as the Federalists delighted to call it, was very unpopular in New England. The President's Proclamation of an Embargo touched the pocket, paralyzing thriving industries and destroying the prosperous commerce. His "Retaliation" Proclamation wounded the feelings of his political opponents. Some of the American prisoners had been sent to England to be tried as traitors on the ground that they were subjects of the British Crown, who had taken up arms against their sovereign. Some had been confined in a dungeon in Halifax, it was reported, and in Quebec, black, rotten bread, honey-combed with vermin, according to the affidavit of a Lake Champlain pilot, caused the death of many prisoners.<sup>1</sup> The *Boston Patriot*, of January 1, 1814, contains the advertisement of a book, "Barbarities of the Enemy," published in Troy, N. Y., in November, 1813.

As an act of reprisal, announcement was made in the *Essex Register* of Salem, of Saturday, October 9, 1813, that:

On Thursday last, ten English prisoners were selected from the Prison-ship in this Town and sent to Ipswich Stone Jail, to be kept in close confinement as hostages in part for the 16 unfortunate Americans confined in a dungeon at Halifax. We also learn that about 100 English soldiers and seamen are to be detained in retalia-

<sup>1</sup> *Boston Patriot*, January 5, 1814.

tion for these so unaccountably selected from the American prisoners at Halifax and sent to England.

Three months passed without any move to relieve these prisoners, but early in January, 1814, public attention was centred on these unfortunates by a violent newspaper controversy between the *Essex Register*, a Democratic sheet, edited by the famous Dr. Bentley, and the *Essex or Salem Gazette*.

A correspondent, who signed himself "Essex," wrote a communication to the *Gazette*, which was published on January 14:

In the *Essex Register* of the 1st inst. was the following notice.

#### RETALIATION.

"Ten of the petty officers of the *Chesapeake* frigate having been released from close confinement at Halifax, the ten British officers, who have been closely confined in Ipswich jail in retaliation have been likewise released."

This agreeable intelligence has been republished in most of our papers under the name of "Christian Retaliation," and no doubt was entertained of its truth. It is time that the public should be correctly informed on the subject of the unfortunate prisoners at Ipswich. Seventeen of our fellow-beings have been immured in dungeons in our own neighborhood three months and the public attention has not been called to their sufferings. The following we believe to be a correct statement of this affair.

On the 7th of October, 1813, James Prince Esq., Marshal of this District, issued his mandate directed

"To the under keeper of the gaol of the United States at Ipswich" . . . requiring him, "to receive into his custody and safely keep in DUNGEONS in the gaol aforesaid, the bodies of Thomas Cooper . . . in retaliation for cruelties," said to be "exercised" on certain persons at Halifax, "and also as hostages to respond for any acts of violence, which may be inflicted on them."

These men have ever since been kept in dungeons as dreary as Mr. Madison could desire. The gaol is a gloomy stone building. The dungeons are 7 ft. by 10 on the ground floor, of rough stone at top, bottom and on all sides. There are loop holes or narrow openings of two or three inches wide, through the upper part of the stone walls, to admit the little light and air which these unfortunate victims are allowed to enjoy. In damp weather, the water runs down

the walls, and drips from the stone ceiling over the floors. These dungeons were never intended for any other purpose than to punish the worst of criminals by a few days solitary imprisonment, and it is believed have never been used even for that purpose. Yet in these places have 17 innocent men been languishing for 3 months, 16 of them 4 in a dungeon, and the other (Capt. Ross) in a dungeon by himself. A few days since 10 of them were removed to the cells in the second story, appropriated to criminals. These cells are larger than the dungeons but extremely cold and uncomfortable.

So far have these unfortunate prisoners been "released," and no further. Seven, viz. Capts. Ross and Clements, Lieuts. Owen, Black and Nickerson, and two seamen it is understood are still confined in two dungeons; and on some of the late cold nights several were chilled almost past recovery, notwithstanding they had received a supply of warm clothing from some charitable individuals: and medical aid was necessarily called in to restore the perishing, and it is only by this charitable relief and the attention of the gaoler's family not warranted by the orders of Government, that these poor prisoners are not dead.

. . . . .  
The public are already informed from authentic sources that the 16 Americans who were in prison in Halifax, were not shut up in dungeons. They were confined in apartments, with which they were so well satisfied that they preferred remaining there to being removed to Melville Island.

"Essex" closed his letter with an appeal to the Legislature to take this unwarranted use of a County Prison by the General Government under consideration.

On January 21, 1814, another article appeared, bearing the caption, "The Dungeons of the Inquisition." A correspondent, who signed himself "Howard," having examined the records of the Inquisition of Portugal and elsewhere, institutes some damaging comparisons between the dungeons in which the victims of the Inquisition were confined, and those in the notorious Ipswich jail. Thus, he notes that the former were shut up in dungeons, 10 or 11 feet long, 8 or 9 feet. wide, and appends the foot-note, "larger than Ipswich." "The sufferers sat in darkness, anxious for the night that they may have a light;" *foot-note*, "We do not know whether the British prisoners at Ipswich have a light in the night." "Out of their allowance, deduction was made for washing, fuel, etc." *Foot-note*,

"The dungeons in Ipswich, we understand, have no fire in them."  
"The prisoners of the Inquisition slept on tiled floors." *Foot-note.* "The dungeons at Ipswich have stone flooring, which are colder than tile or brick, and in damp weather I have been told the prisoners lay a board or two upon the stones to keep themselves out of the wet."

Fortunately for the Ipswich dungeons this well-balanced, antiphonic refrain fails in its last member. "The countenances of those who are brought out for an auto-de-fé show the treatment they have received for they are so altered that nobody can recognize them." The suggested inference only is that the filth, vermin and stench of the Ipswich dungeons have caused similar transformation in the British prisoners.

In the next issue, William Gray, in an article headed, "Must we wait to hear from France?" quotes from the works of the philanthropist Howard the narrative of his visit to a French prison. "In four of these dungeons (10 ft. 8 in. by 6 ft. 8 in.) I saw 16 prisoners, two in irons, all lying upon straw," and calls attention to the fact that these are a little bigger than the Ipswich dungeons.

To all this, the *Register* retorted that there was gross misrepresentation of the treatment of the Ipswich prisoners, but acknowledged that the Marshal visited the jail on the 23d of December and removed all, except one sick of a fever and one left to take care of him, to more comfortable quarters.

Evidently, there is reason to believe that in the heat of partisan controversy there was considerable exaggeration of the facts concerning the Ipswich stone jail. As a matter of fact it was a new building, built according to the approved plans of prison architecture. It was planned in 1799, but building operations were not begun until 1803 or later, and in the meantime Colonel Wade of Ipswich, the County Treasurer, had visited Concord and examined the prison there. It was completed in 1806, a plain two-story building, with four rooms in each floor, the lower rooms designed for thieves and disturbers of the public peace and the upper rooms for the safe-keeping of those imprisoned for debt. By a singular accident, if accident it be, the annual reports of the jailer of the Ipswich jail for the period covered in this controversy are not found in the files of the Court of General Sessions, but in the report of years a little

later, the number of prisoners would involve as great crowding as in the case under review.

A new stone jail was being built in Salem, in the year 1813, which was modelled in the main after the Ipswich prison. The Committee appointed to make the preliminary inquiries, reported on March 25, 1811:

That it is expedient and necessary to build a stone Gaol at Salem with comfortable apartments for debtors separate from criminals and with accommodations for the safe keeping of prisoners and for punishment of convicts.

The Committee ask leave to suggest the propriety of furnishing the debtors' rooms with grates or stoves to be fixed in the walls in such manner as that those rooms may be warmed as circumstances may require. The other rooms also may be occasionally warmed by iron stoves placed in the entries.

The probable cost of the whole structure, it was calculated, would not exceed the cost of the Ipswich jail. The ground plan of the new Salem jail shows four cells, 10 by 10 feet, and four others, 15 feet 10½ inches by 10½ feet. It was the common type of the prisons of the period, and was similar to the New York prisons, regarding which Mr. McMaster<sup>1</sup> reveals extraordinary conditions, moral and physical. I find it hard to believe that such barbarities could have found place in our New England towns, inasmuch as only a few years later, in 1820, the sentiment toward prisoners was so humane, that petitions were signed by many of the influential citizens of Newburyport and Salem, and in response, the Court assigned definite limits in each town, within which debtors were allowed their liberty, and the opportunity of work, and the privilege of entering any meeting house within the prescribed bounds.

Meanwhile a merry war was being waged in the columns of the Worcester papers, the *Boston Patriot* and the *Massachusetts Centinel*, between Hon. Francis Blake, the friend and counsel of the British officers imprisoned in the Worcester jail, and Mr. Prince, the United States Marshal. The really tragic experiences of the Ipswich prisoners give place here to an amusing series of serio-comic happenings. If we may presume to judge what the real facts of the case were, by balancing the

<sup>1</sup> IV. 542.

charges and denials, in piecing together the bits of truth that were acknowledged by all, these English officers were men of wealth and refinement, attended by man-servants, well equipped with buffalo coats and clothing adequate to the severities of a New England winter, and they seem to have been enjoying their parole of honor in such pleasant fashion, that friendships had grown up with men of influence. When the blow fell and the Marshal acting in obedience to his instructions was obliged to remove them to prison, they resented his act as a personal indignity, and Mr. Blake, a member of the Senate and a prominent citizen, acted as their counsel.

In the *Boston Patriot* of January 15, 1814, the Marshal replies to the charge made in the *Worcester Gazette* of the 5th, that he had "executed in a rude and unfeeling manner the Presidential mandate for the imprisonment of the ten British officers, prisoners of war, confined in the gaol of the County," pronouncing it utterly false, and making the counter charge that the Hon. Francis Blake, appearing as their counsel, declared "he was ready for rebellion, when British officers were arrested."

The same issue reported that nine of these prisoners had made their escape.

It is rational to conclude they had external assistance, and from the disposition of certain individuals in Worcester, it is probable they found no difficulty in obtaining it. . . . *i.e.* where the doors of our prisons are treacherously set open and the subjects of the enemy held as hostages for the safety of our own citizens are set at liberty, when in short some of our own magistrates appear to have enlisted into the service of the enemy, it is time for the National government to adopt such wise and energetic measures as will defeat the design of foreign emissaries and domestic foes.

The Marshal published a proclamation offering \$500 reward for the apprehension of the escaped prisoners, information of traitorous help, etc. Five of them were soon retaken in the town of Barre.

Mr. Blake retorted in the next issue of the *Patriot*: "A false and slanderous communication . . . imperiously demands from me a reply." His reported declaration about being ready for rebellion he affirmed was "a base, malicious and infamous falsehood." So far from sleeping on feather beds with



comfortable blankets, "we found that bags of dirty straw with filthy and offensive rugs had been taken from the common stock of the prison and thrown on the floor, without a sheet or a blanket for their covering, and without a chair or other furniture for their accommodation."

He appended the affidavit of Hon. Oliver Fisk that he had found the prisoners in dirty quarters, with scant fire, straw for bed, etc., and made further charges against the Marshal, whom he is pleased to style, "a bloated pensioner upon the public sufferings."

He most infamously and falsely asserted that either he or the Government was in possession of the baptismal certificates of 22 of the 23 prisoners, who had been sent to England for trial from which it would appear they were American citizens. The inference which it was intended the British officers should draw from this was in case of their execution, they themselves would be inevitably hung. An inference admirably calculated to render their confinement more comfortable and tranquil.

In a two-column communication in the *Patriot* of January 26, the Marshal cleared himself from the charge of unnecessary severity, as the Cartel provided for three shillings a day.

In a letter from Dr. Lincoln he states it was understood they were to have coffee with toast, crackers, butter and steak for breakfast, Roast and boiled meats with the variety of vegetables with which the country abounds, and pies and puddings, together with good cider as a beverage for their dinners, and the same for supper and to be furnished with firing, good beds and bedding, for which \$3½ a week was to be paid the gaoler.

The picture that Mr. Blake had drawn of the scene of the arrest is affecting in the extreme. These British officers were together, when the Marshal appeared. One of them of peculiar gentleness of temperament, with the most hospitable intent was about opening a closet door, that he might offer their guest becoming refreshment. The Marshal laid his hand roughly upon his shoulder, so that the astonished officer was almost moved to tears. To which Mr. Prince replied that he thought the prisoner was opening the door to effect his escape, that he communicated to them with delicacy and tenderness, that they were afterwards indulged to dine, and to remain at large until the close of the day, that their servants were not

excluded, nor were they deprived of their buffalo coats, and that arrangements were made for their comfort and accommodation as was due their rank.

In the *Massachusetts Centinel*, of February 2, Mr. Blake published the sworn affidavit of Mr. Heard, the gaoler, that he had never said he had received instructions to treat them better than ordinary prisoners. In the *Patriot* of the 5th, Mr. Prince published the sworn affidavits of his Deputy, the Collector of the Port of Boston, and other reputable citizens, that they heard the gaoler use these words.

Whatever the truth may have been, the Federal newspapers were not open to conviction. The *Newburyport Herald* of February 8 reviewed the Blake-Prince controversy and pronounced judicially: "In short it appears from the evidence that Marshal Prince's conduct toward the prisoners was cruel, vindictive and base." This was the undoubted Federal sentiment.

The Legislature had been appealed to, and it took decisive action. Governor Strong approved on February 7, 1814, "An Act, Declaratory of the true intent and meaning of an Act, entitled, 'An Act to provide for the safe keeping all prisoners committed under the authority of the United States in the several gaols within the Commonwealth.'"

That nothing contained in an Act, entitled . . . shall be so construed as to authorize the keepers of the said gaols to take custody of and keep within said gaols, any prisoners committed by any other authority than the Judicial Authority of the United States.

And whereas several prisoners of war have been committed to gaols, within this Commonwealth under the Executive Authority of the United States.

Sec. 2. Be it further enacted That the keepers of the said gaols are hereby authorized and required to discharge from said gaols all such prisoners of war, after the expiration of thirty days from the passing of this Act, unless they shall be sooner discharged by the authority of the United States.

This led to an act of Congress, says Mr. Hildreth,<sup>1</sup> authorizing the marshals of the United States, whenever the use of stone jails was withdrawn, to provide other places of im-

<sup>1</sup> *History of the United States*, vi. 470.

prisonment; "and to an application by the President to his faithful Legislature of Pennsylvania for the use of the Pennsylvania penitentiaries."

Removal was made by the Government, but shortly afterward, some of the American prisoners, who had been sent to England were released on parole, and commissioned to inform the American government that the twenty-three prisoners, charged with treason, had not been brought to trial, but remained on the ordinary footing of prisoners of war. This was followed by a dismissal on parole of all the officers, prisoners on both sides.

Happily for the British officers whose experience in the Ipswich "dungeons" and the Worcester jail had been so painful, nothing remained but bitter memories. But profound and enduring significance was attached to the action of the Massachusetts Legislature. By its refusal to permit the President of the United States to use its jails, it had taken a long step toward the declaration of the right of the State against the Federal Government. It was in complete harmony with the action of Governor Strong in refusing to allow the Massachusetts militia to be enrolled by the Government for service outside the Commonwealth, and with the Proclamation of Governor Chittenden of Vermont, ordering the return of a brigade of Vermont militia, which was serving under the command of a United States officer outside the jurisdiction of the State Executive, to return forthwith. Taking their stand upon the Constitution of the United States, the men of New England declared that no exigency had arisen that authorized the general government to call out the militia, or interfere with the privileges and rights of a sovereign state.

Mr. MURDOCK presented, for publication, five letters selected from his collection:

JOHN WENTWORTH <sup>1</sup> TO JOHN HANCOCK.

EXETER, 21st April, 1775.

SIR, — Upon the melancholy Intelligence of Hostilities being committed by the Regular troops upon our Brethren in your province the provincial Committee thought proper Immediately to call a Convention in order to consult in what manner they might afford

<sup>1</sup> (1719-1781), of Somersworth.

Seasonable Succour, to your province, but before convention could meet,<sup>1</sup> our men had taken the alarm and marched, many of them unprovided with ammunition and provisions, not being able to obtain certain Intelligence whether they are or may be needed, or can be supplied by our Brethren there with those necessities, this convention have therefore appointed a Committee of their Body<sup>2</sup> to wait on your Congress for that purpose, and to obtain Information what further measures you may Think proper to be pursued for the General good. I am, Sir, your most Obedt. Humb. Servt.

JNO. WENTWORTH.

FROM LORD GEORGE GERMAIN.

STONELAND LODGE, July 27th 1775.

DEAR SIR, — I thank you for your letter and for the *Gazette*. The Action<sup>3</sup> does honour to the Troops, but I must lament the loss of so many good officers and so many brave men, what pity it is that these Rebels cannot be met upon fair ground; I trust this defeat will cool their courage, and that Mr. Gage's intelligence will prove true about the difficulty of keeping them together. I cannot conceive how the Rebel army is pay'd or subsisted; when the Trade is stopp'd and the intercourse between the Provinces prevented by the men of war, what resources can be found for the providing the innumerable demands of an army in the field, and for the supporting the families of those who die in action, or are ruin'd by the burning of Towns etc. etc.

I see by Gage's account that he commends Mr. Howe and Clinton because he must, but he praises Pigot with warmth and affection. Col: Abercrombie's death will be a particular Loss to the army, as he understood the making war in that Country as well as any officer. I hope the Ministers will now think seriously of recruiting and encreasing the force there; if the Rebels persevere you will never reduce them by arms but by Possessing of New yorke, and carrying on your offensive operations from thence. The more I think upon that subject the more I am convinced of its being right. I took the Liberty of saying so in my letter to Lord Suffolk,<sup>4</sup> and I am persuaded till that idea is adopted and vigorously pursu'd no decisive blow can be struck, and the protracting a war of this sort is dangerous in the highest degree. when the four Regts. destined for N.

<sup>1</sup> It assembled at Exeter on the day this letter was written, and Wentworth was chosen its President.

<sup>2</sup> Josiah Bartlett and Theophilus Gilman. *N. H. Prov. Papers*, vii. 454.

<sup>3</sup> Bunker Hill, June 17.

<sup>4</sup> Henry Howard, twelfth Earl of Suffolk (1739-1779).

Yorke join the army at Boston, I conclude we shall hear of another attack, I hope with as good success and with less loss than in this last. I beg you would assure my Lord Suffolk of my respect and best wishes. I am, Dear Sir, Your faithfull Humble Serv't.

GEO: GERMAIN.

JOHN HANCOCK TO DOROTHY HANCOCK.

YORK TOWN, June 20th, 1778,  
Saturday morning.

MY DEAR DOLLY, — I arrived at this place the 18th Inst. after a most fatiguing Journey, bad roads and miserable entertainment, but thank God I am in tolerable health. I long much to hear from you and the little John.<sup>1</sup> I hope this will find you well over the hurry of your week's company, and that your health is thoroughly establish'd. This is my fourth letter, and besides many messages by persons who promis'd me they would call upon you and inform you of meeting me well on the road. Do let me know if three sailors call'd on you with a message from me, they had been prisoners and were returning. I gave them sixteen dollars on the road, and they promis'd to call. I met Mr. Adams who keeps with my Brother,<sup>2</sup> he will call. Mr. and Mrs. Hillegas are well, desire their compliments to you, she wrote you by Mr. Adams. Capt. Landais<sup>3</sup> just going off I have only time to add my regards to all friends, love to Mr. Bant and my Brother, to Mrs. Brackett and all in the family. I shall write you fully by Mr. Dodd<sup>4</sup> who sets off for Boston on Monday and shall write Mr. Bant and my Brother, do beg them to write me and send me the news papers. My Dear, I must beseech you to write me often, if you wish my health you will not omit one opportunity. Pray do not neglect me in that respect. I will write you particularly by Dodd. I wish you the best of Heaven's blessings, and am with the most perfect love, Yours for ever,

JOHN HANCOCK.

[Endorsed] To Mrs. Hancock at her house near the Common, Boston. Favored by Capt. Landais.

We have this moment an account that the enemy have evacuated Philadelphia and that some of our Troops have march'd in, and taken possession of the City.

J. H.

YORK TOWN, 20 June.

<sup>1</sup> John George Washington Hancock (1778-1787).

<sup>2</sup> Ebenezer Hancock (1741-1819).

<sup>3</sup> Pierre Landais (1734-1820), just appointed to the command of the new Continental frigate, the *Alliance*.

<sup>4</sup> William Dodd, one of the "express" riders for the Continental Congress.

## LORD NORTH TO MAJOR GENERAL RIEDESEL.

*Duplicate.*

WHITEHALL, 16th April, 1783.

SIR, — The Provisional Articles of a Treaty of Peace having been agreed upon between His Majesty and the United States of North America, and it being intended to abstain from all offensive Operations in Canada; I have the King's commands to acquaint you, that Instructions have been sent to Governor Haldimand to make the necessary preparations for your return to Europe, with the Troops of His Serene Highness the Prince of Brunswick.

The King has further commanded me to signify to You that during your residence in Canada he has received the most honorable testimonies of your merit and services, and of the spirited behaviour of your Officers and Men. I beg leave to add on this occasion, that I have peculiar satisfaction in conveying to You this assurance of His Majesty's approbation, which, it is His Royal wish should be expressed to You in the most ample manner.

I have the honor to be, Sir, Your most obedient humble servant,  
NORTH.

MAJOR GENERAL REIDSESEL.

## JOHN ADAMS TO WILLIAM PLUMER.

QUINCY, March 28, 1813.

DEAR SIR, — You enquire, in your kind letter of the 19th whether, "every Member of Congress did, on the 4th of July 1776, in fact cordially approve of the declaration of Independence"?

They who were then Members all signed it, and as I could not see their hearts, it would be hard for me to say that they did not approve it: but as far as I could penetrate, the intricate internal foldings of their Souls, I then believed, and have not since altered my Opinion, that there were several who signed with regret, and several others with many doubts and much lukewarmness. The Measure had been upon the carpet for Months, and obstinately opposed from day to day. Majorities were constantly against it. For many days the Majority depended on Mr. Hews<sup>1</sup> of North Carolina. While a Member, one day was speaking and reading documents from all the Colonies to prove that the Public Opinion, the general Sense of all was in favour of the Measure, when he came to North Carolina and produced letters and public proceedings which demonstrated that the Majority of that Colony were in favour of it, Mr. Hews who had hitherto constantly voted against it, started suddenly upright, and lifting up both his Hands to Heaven as if he

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Hewes (1730-1779).

had been in a trance, cry'd out "It is done! and I will abide by it." I would give more for a perfect Painting of the terror and horror upon the Faces of the Old Majority at that critical moment than for the best Piece of Raphaelle. The Question however was eluded by an immediate Motion for Adjournment. The Struggle in Congress was long known abroad. Some Members who foresaw that the point would be carried, left the House and went home to avoid voting in the Affirmative or Negative. Pennsylvania and New Jersey recalled all their Delegates who had voted against Independence and sent new ones expressly to vote for it. The last debate but one was the most copious and the most animated; but the Question was now evaded by a Motion to postpone it to another day, some Members however declaring that if the Question should be now demanded, they should now vote for it, but they wished for a day or two more to consider of it. When that day arrived some of the New Members desired to hear the Arguments for and against the Measure. When these were summarily recapitulated The Question was put and carried. There were no Yeas and Nays in those times. A Committee was appointed to draw a Declaration, when reported underwent an Abundance of Criticism and Alteration: but when finally accepted all those Members who had voted against Independence now declared they would sign it and support it.

The Appointment of General Washington to the Command in 1775 of an Army in Cambridge, consisting altogether of New England men, over the head of Officers of their own Flesh and Choice, a most hazardous step, was another instance of Apparent Unanimity and real regret in nearly one half. But this history is too long for this letter.

The Taxes must be laid and the War supported.

I have nothing from My Son <sup>1</sup> since 28. Oct. I know not how we shall ever get him home: though that is the most anxious wish of my heart. Pray write him as often as you can.

I regret the change of hands, in N. H. at this juncture very much.<sup>2</sup> With great respect I am, dear Sir, your Friend and Servant,

JOHN ADAMS.

Through the courtesy of Miss Mary Rivers the Editor prints the following extracts from a journal kept by Miss Lydia Smith, daughter of Barney Smith, and sent in the form of letters to her friend Miss Anna Lothrop, of Boston, later Mrs. Thomas

<sup>1</sup> John Quincy Adams, at this time in St. Petersburg, as United States Minister Plenipotentiary.

<sup>2</sup> The election of John Taylor Gilman as governor.



*Lydia Smith*

*From the original portrait by Gilbert Stuart  
in the possession of Miss Mary Rivers*



Motley, and mother of the historian, John Lothrop Motley. The journal was kept in 1805 and 1806, and but a fragment appears to have been preserved.

Last evening<sup>1</sup> I was at the representation of Hamlet at Drury Lane theatre. To say I was pleas'd, you would doubt so cold a term — I was "rapt, inspir'd." Young Roscius<sup>2</sup> in Hamlet, even in Hamlet, lost none of the interest he had excited in the more simple character of Achmet.<sup>3</sup> In the variety of Hamlet's character it is almost impossible not to fail in some parts, and the sensibility, almost absorb'd in the interesting Prince, is shock'd at the least deviation from Nature and is impatient at the most trivial mistake that serves to dispel the illusion into which the mind loses itself. I discover'd faults even with his perfections. Roscius avoids the offence which most actors commit, that of addressing the audience instead of the person with whom he is conversing; but he often falls into an equal one, and addresses his speech to the air, and turns his head to heaven, and "conjures the wandering stars" instead of his companion, who stands awkwardly confused to answer what was not address'd to him. The other fault I perceive in him is a kind of boyish levity which sometimes shows itself, even in Hamlet; particularly when surprise is exprest, he is apt to look in a "Wonderment," a thing unpardonable in such a character as Hamlet. But he supported the part most admirably. The scene between him and the Ghost was impressive and affecting; the closet scene which requires the strongest exertion of passion was almost inimitable; he was more animated than Cooper,<sup>4</sup> but not so solemn; he had more passion, but was neither so affecting or affected. The melody of Cooper's voice was wanting, and I think all that was wanting. The "Beauteous Majesty of Denmark" was Mrs. Powell.<sup>5</sup> She seconded his efforts so well as to render it truly interesting, particularly in this scene. Her figure is majestic, her face is not so handsome as *our* Mrs. Powell;<sup>6</sup> but her features are fine, her voice is superior, and so well expressed the deep remorse and repentance of the Queen that I even wept. It was impossible to behold uninterested what it would have been treason to sensibility to have disbelieved. You have told

<sup>1</sup> Some time in December, 1805.

<sup>2</sup> William Henry West Betty (1791-1874).

<sup>3</sup> Or Selim, in John Brown's "Barbarossa."

<sup>4</sup> John Cooper (fl. 1810-1870).

<sup>5</sup> Mrs. Powell was three times married, and known under the names of Mrs. Farmer, Mrs. Powell and Mrs. Renaud. She acted from 1787 to 1829, supporting with ability the leading actors of the day, and had even taken the part of Hamlet to Mrs. Jordan's Ophelia.

<sup>6</sup> Mrs. Snelling Powell, who was Miss Harrison before her marriage.

me to describe to you what I see and I would obey; but in descending into the impertinence of description I may incur the censure of your patience. But I will forewarn you that I am proceeding in an exact detail of what and how, etc. So that you may either arm yourself with patience or throw by the sheets, as I shall say what I have a mind to and all I have a mind to. To give you an idea of this Theatre, I should know its dimensions; but as I cannot correctly state them, I will say that it is vast and stupendous. It is about five times as large as Federal Street, so I was told; but it is impossible to form any comparison by the mere eye. There are four tiers of boxes. The decorations of this Theatre are extremely elegant; on the front of each box there is a tablet of fine painting, and so much gilding about it as to give it a gay and lively air. The stage boxes are partition'd from the rest, partly by a lattice work and by a wall that receives two large mirrors. But they do not chuse to sport these on common occasions, and never put them up but when the royal family are here, and they then dress these out in Crimson Velvet, etc. We sat in one of them — it is called the Prince of Wales box — the same from where he look'd so sweet a[t] Mrs. Robinson.<sup>1</sup> Should you not have considered the place consecrated? I was very much offended to find the box rob'd of the Royal Purple and intend never to sit there again, unless beforehand sending a demand to the Privy Council to have it in full dress: and as Eloise wonders whether Bonaparte would not make peace to permit Mrs. Capt to go to France, if he knew that prevented her, so do I wonder if the House of Lords would not bring it in Crowners Quest that the box should be in Royal habiliments, in order to induce me to honour it with my presence. They never bring on their whole forces at once, tho' this play in all its parts was respectably supported. The dignity and elegance of Mrs. Powell were all we should wish in her character. Mr. Powell<sup>2</sup> in his Majesty looked the Villain, and acted his part most villanously well. Mr. Dawton in Polonius was much more correct and more respectable than our Dickinson;<sup>3</sup> he had more the air of a Court about him. Dickinson is too low and vulgar in his

<sup>1</sup> Mary Robinson. The name of her father's family had been changed from McDermott to Darby, and he, born in America, served as captain of a Bristol whaler. The daughter married Thomas Robinson, and acted at Drury Lane, becoming the mistress of the Prince of Wales, and later of Banastre Tarleton, the well-known cavalry officer in the American War of Independence. Born in 1758, she died in 1800.

<sup>2</sup> He had been prompter at Liverpool, and later at the Drury Lane Theatre. He married about 1789 and died about 1811.

<sup>3</sup> Seilhamer (III. 356) mentions a Mr. Dickenson, who made his first appearance on any stage as Saville at the Haymarket Theatre, Boston. His real name was Dickson, an Englishman, who came to the United States about 1795.

drollery for anything but Scrub or a pert footman. Polonius, tho a fool, must have been polish'd, and besides he was the "Next man to the King." Now no one would ever believe Dickinson the "Next man to the King but when he pull'd his boots off." I was very much displeas'd with Mr. Bartley<sup>1</sup> in Laertes, the more so because his faults were from carelessness; he has powers and is a "very proper man;" and whilst he is speaking is correct and interesting; but that finished he is no longer Laertes but Mr. Bartley, looking round and smiling at the audience, recognizing his acquaintances and appears totally abstracted from the play — a most unpardonable fault. The delusion is entirely destroy'd, and who is ever thank'd destroying a delusion when the best pleasures of this life are but illusions. Dear Deceit! when the visions are lost "how flat, stale and unprofitable seem all this to me." Mr. Holland<sup>2</sup> was Horatio. I believe this Holland was once upon the American boards; he is not young enough for Hamlet's friend, and you remember that Horatio was formerly a good natured fellow, a "man that was not Passion's slave;" but I was so near him that I heard him swear most terribly several times. The Ghost look[ed] most terrific in a front view of him. His armour concealed his figure, but he was a "fine portly man," and rather seem'd to have come from the fires of a cook's kitchen than from sulphurous flames. His voice was full and solemn. The scene where he appears in the closet was conducted so as to leave no time to recover from the interesting delusion; there was no pause, no vacuum for the passions to recover themselves. Mrs. Powell was all astonishment and horror, Roscius was all impassion'd, and the Ghost all impressive. I never beheld so interesting a group. You could not look at either without perceiving the connexion of the whole. They seem'd as tho' arranged by the skilful hand of a painter who had disposed of each figure so artfully as to give effect to the whole. I have seen this tragedy performed five times, but till now I never saw an Ophelia. Mrs. Mountain<sup>3</sup> in the interesting Ophelia was all sweetness and all softness. She has a handsome face and a good figure, to speak without enthusiasm; her voice is all melody, and in the maniac scene she was *toute interessante*. Instead of degenerating into that shrillness which is painful to the ear, she preserved with wildness of her song a full tone of melting sweetness perfectly characteristic. There are few of our actresses who preserve enough of nature and simplicity to

<sup>1</sup> George Bartley (1782?-1858). He and his wife, Sarah Bartley (1783-1850), visited America in 1818.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Holland (1768-1849?). His name is not mentioned in Seilhamer.

<sup>3</sup> Mrs. Rosoman Mountain (1768?-1841), daughter of one Wilkinson, a circus performer, and wife of John Mountain.

even conceive of the character of Ophelia. I had an opportunity of admiring Mrs. Mountain by her comparative superiority over Mrs. Jones,<sup>1</sup> who marr'd it so execrably last year. Mrs. Mountain had not forgotten her bashfulness, but *your* sweet Ophelia had lost every trace of hers. I was in admiration at Mrs. M's voice; she has power with it and a harmony superior to anything I ever have heard. Would you not have thought that, seated for the first time within the wall of "Majestic Drury," that my sensations must have been awful, when the mysterious curtain which veil'd from our expectant eyes scenes of anticipated delight and admiration, when at the signal bell it rose — you remember the solemnity of the first opening of Hamlet — the time mysterious midnight, and a conspiracy of horrors to impress an interest in the mind. The scene you know is admirably contrived for effect. Should you not have imagined me almost congealed with expectation, that my pulse almost forgot its motion at this moment? And so I was prepar'd for all this; but no sooner did the curtain rise than all sentiment dispers'd, the most unwarrantable merriment possess'd me, for who should salute my sight but our comical little *soi disant* Dykes, or Lathy<sup>2</sup> (I forget which), at whom we have so often laughed on our stage, all accoutred, cap-a-pie as Francesco. Eloise<sup>3</sup> will well remember the sport we have had with this manikin. He is still the same diverting little figure, has the same queer phiz, and I thought that he was one of those whom nature's journeymen had made and that most execrably. The musick of the orchestra was grand. The band was very full as it must be to fill this vast Theatre. This kind of musick is not very much thought of in Boston, because it requires too much taste and science to understand it, and for that reason it is not even attended to, nor thought part of the amusement. They do not even know that they are imposed upon by bad musicians and miserable musick. If this were attended to, it would become the favorite part of the performance. To hear one of the grand overtures of Hayden, Handel, etc., well play'd, with every part properly supported, is most exquisite harmony. Songs are in general most admir'd because they are translations of the sound; but when one can understand an original it is the most delightful refinement. There is as much *sense* in musick as in poetry. Musick

<sup>1</sup> Of the Boston Theatre, and the Sollee Charleston Company. She played Juliet and Lady Macbeth.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Pike Lathy (1771), a novelist, who was in America in 1800, when his "Reparation, or the School for Libertines," a dramatic piece, was performed at the Boston Theatre. He was living in 1819, when he perpetrated a hoax upon Gosden, the publisher.

<sup>3</sup> Eloise Payne, sister of John Howard Payne.

requires more cultivation than the latter; it is conceived only by imagination and translated by sensibility. A composer when he writes a piece of musick has a deeper meaning than the mere arrangement of the notes; it is the language which expresses his soul, and it requires one well vers'd in it to understand it. Many feel it, and some understand it. How often have I been sensible to its effect without knowing why; have felt its indescribable emotions; but I now know just enough of it to pedantize, and that is one of the happiest degrees of knowledge, when one knows enough to be vain. Beyond that one is lost in a maze of unbounded knowledge which rather serves to teach us what we cannot know, than what we may or have attained. Did ever you yourself now think of attending to the orchestra? It appears to me to be a thing totally unthought of; and the audience seem to regard it as merely to mingle with the other noise and confusion of the theatre in order to increase it, and no one dreams of anything like sentiment after the play is finished. They're for a "Jig or a Song of Baudry, or they sleep." So much for Home!

I had almost said that I was as much pleas'd with the Afterpiece as with the Tragedy; but out of respect to Shakspeare, to sentiment, and my own understanding, I will not confess it. It was but one of the common run of farces — nothing good, either in design or execution; but the musick was fine and the players admirable. It is call'd the Soldier's return. The name gives you the whole of the plot. Mrs. Mountain reappeared in Belinda and was as interesting as ever. Mrs. Bland<sup>1</sup> in the character of Fanny display'd her skill in singing. She and Mrs. Mountain in a duett were admirable; they were applauded and encor'd and I had the pleasure of hearing again their *voix harmonieux*. This Mrs. Bland is the wife of Wilson<sup>2</sup> of the Federal St. Theatre. I could not bear to look at her, tho I admir'd to hear her. She is a short clumsy creature, and has such a wicked expression in her face, it was a kind of self-condemnation. She treads the stage with so much ease and assurance that she seems "perfectly at home," the impudent thing! Her *voix* has a most astonishing resemblance to that of Mrs. Jones of Fed'l St. Theatre. If it were not the difference of appearance, it would be impossible to distinguish the different voices. There is a certain fineness in it which distinguishes Mrs. Jones'. It is entirely different from the melody of Mrs.

<sup>1</sup> Maria Theresa (Romanzini) Bland (1769-1838), who married Bland, a brother of Mrs. Dorothea (Bland) Jordan (1762-1816) of the Drury Lane Theatre. Mrs. Bland is said to have treated her husband badly, and, leaving her, he came to America, where he died.

<sup>2</sup> An actor in minor parts, named Wilson, was at the Boston Haymarket in 1796-1797, but his identity with Bland was not known.

Mountain's; it was the same voice which Mrs. J. possess when she was first on our stage. It was then at its perfection, it has since lost all its power and become perfectly dissonant. Mr. De Camp was a perfect Racket. Johnstone<sup>1</sup> was Dermont O. Doddipole, was really him. This seems to have from Nature Letters patent of merriment and drollery. She (Nature) seems to have stamp'd upon his visage a defiance to all sentiment and sobriety. I used to think Bernard<sup>2</sup> immensely droll, but he is no more to Johnstone "than I to Hercules." Bernard has great powers to "make mouths and distort himself most admirably — this fellow is naturally irresistible." The expression of his countenance is what you would judge the Falstaff of Shakspeare to be; not *more* of refinement. He is an antidote to melancholy. 'Tis impossible to look at him unmov'd. He does not appear to exert himself to excite a laugh; he only looks and the whole house is in a roar; and if to laugh be a heresy against common sense, this fellow was sent on earth to make fools of us all. The last, best character, was Miss De Camp, the exquisite, the irresistible Miss De Camp.<sup>3</sup> Of all the beings I have ever seen upon the stage I have never seen her equal. Her every movement is grace and vivacity, her voice delightful, her attitude is elegance. She has the air of an Euphrosyne. Her countenance is rather expressive than handsome, 'tis animated and interesting. What will give you a more exact idea of her, she resembles extremely your Amie Amore Callahan. She has the same sylph-like form, her eye *plein d'esprit*. There is a peculiar turn of feature which characterizes both, the first idea that struck me at her entrée was this semblance. It might be that only seeing your friend *en passant*, or at a distant view, my picture of her might not be correct. My portrait of her being partly from imagination, I may have erroneously drawn it; but I could not have been mistaken as to the resemblance. I was delighted with it for your sake, delighted with it. I attempted to survey impartially her features to convince myself if I were right or not; but after I had the idea of this similarity I could look only with partial eyes, the more I look[ed] the more I traced it, and *enfin* I had them so mingled together I could not distinguish the least difference between the original and the representative. . . . This Miss De Camp is I find a general favorite and what is passing strange bears a most unblemish'd character. The voice of calumny has never tainted her

<sup>1</sup> John Henry Johnstone (1749-1828), known as "Irish Johnstone."

<sup>2</sup> John Bernard (1756-1828), who came to America in 1797, and from 1806 to 1810 was connected with the Federal Street Theatre, Boston.

<sup>3</sup> A Viennese by birth, and whose real name is alleged to have been De Fleury, she became the wife of Charles Kemble. Doran, *Annals of the English Stage*, III. 216.

spotless fame, is not this a virtue indeed? to have surviv'd the fiery ordeal of the Green Room? One may boast of purity that has never stood the test of temptation. The depravity which exists amongst this class of people seems to be its excuse and toleration; the interest they excite, the influence they possess o'er our feelings would be dangerous were it not for the disgust with which we behold them for their vices. That alone counteracts the irresistible spell in which they hold our passions. Can there be a more interesting companion than one of these players? Such as they should be, such as they represent themselves. Possessing all the delicacy of sensibility all refinement of feeling which we imagine so enviable; possessing in their manners the elegance of grace and ease which *seems* so amiable, so enchanting, could they but like Hamlet "know not *seem*," I would admire, reverence and approve. . . .

I<sup>1</sup> find that my idle habit of scribbling interferes so much with all regularity that I have determined to relinquish it, tho not entirely, yet I must so constrain it as to pursue my duties and studies etc. I must wean myself by degrees for I have not strength to quit it at once. I have been today upon what I used to call a *Traipse*! you may remember that was my fort or at least I had acquired a little celebrity at it — this was truly one unabridged. The morning was delightfully fine, ev'ry body alive, (we are still at the Adelphi) from whence we proceeded to the Terrace on the Thames and then thro the Parks and then down thro the City to Lombard Street. You have no idea of the distance unless from its being one of my walks. The contrast between Westminster and the City is astonishing, in the Parks you may sometimes walk uncrowded, but in the City — I almost made a determination never to pass Temple Bar again; but really 'tis the greatest amusement imaginable to pass thro Cornhill and Cheapside, the immense throng of the Mobility make it dangerous; the porters with their loads upon their heads threaten continual annihilation. It appears to me that the lower class in England [are] the most barbarous set of beings on earth, they scarcely ever see a lady in the streets (it is most customary for the genteel class to ride thro these places) and when they do they stare and gape at them as at a raree-show. I was never so heartily ashamed as in my promenade thro Fleet Street. I had dress'd myself *toute à la mode* for the Park, having on all my new finery and as I pass'd along I was mortified by being look'd at by all the idlers and refuse of society and when I enter'd Clementi's there was a half a dozen fools stop'd at the door to look at me. I do not value displaying myself to the inspection of taste and refinement, but to be the

<sup>1</sup> December 30, 1805.

amusement of such a sett I wish'd myself at home and them in the Thames. I have determined if ever I go in the City again to go in disguise. Now imagine me with my Trafalgar Robe and Yeoman's Cap, so new and so gay, splashing along such a crowd as here. I will tell you exactly what a walk thro' the Strand resembles, it is just like one of the Country dances at our Assemblies, there is as much confusion, crowding, shoving, etc., in the one as in the other, tho I certainly give the preference to Concert Hall,<sup>1</sup> because there you stand a chance of being clean and the danger is generally at your feet and here your head runs the continual hazard of fractures etc. from the impudent porters who carry on their heads what our cartmen carry in handcarts. It was an observation of my own that these Anglois had pretty thick skulls for it. I call'd at Clementi's to see his harps, they were extremely elegant. I intend as soon as we are settled to commence taking lessons, at present I am very eager for it, it is very fashionable here and considered one of the most elegant accomplishments. I did not in my excursion meet with any great adventures, but 'tis impossible to pass thro London streets without meeting many things to interest the curiosity. As I pass[ed] along I was much struck with the appearance of a tall and elegant woman. She was supported upon crutches, there was something extremely excentric in her appearance. I inquired who it was and found her to be quite a celebrated character here. She is the sister of Mrs. Siddons.<sup>2</sup> She leads this vagrant life from choice. Mrs. S. and Kemble<sup>3</sup> have offered her a handsome support but she has refused it, it is supposed she gets more from the charity of transient passengers than they would give her. She is known perfectly all over London. It is a kind of tribute I think to the fame of Mrs. Siddons that ensures her the liberality of the public. She is extremely elegant in her form, her features are fine, she is not very old and has no more claim upon the charity of the publick than any other idle beggar, her picture is in all the print shops and you will see it amongst all collections of waxworks; indeed one need not wish a better establishment in London than to be a celebrated beggar, they live in style excepting particular hours, *levee hours* which they appropriate to receiving their friends. I would never give to any such an one as her, it is mere ostentatious vanity and there are so many real objects to whom we owe a tribute that it is defrauding them to give to such as her. This woman is always dres'd as neat and *tasty*, she varies her dress according to the season, in summer a

<sup>1</sup> It stood on the southerly corner of Hanover and Court Streets.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Ann Curtis, whose disreputable career is sketched in Fitzgerald, *The Kembles*, II. 98.

<sup>3</sup> John Philip Kemble (1757-1823).



green jacket and in winter a long cloth cloak. 'Tis a droll idea that she should parade herself thro London for charity; however, she never asks anything, not she she is above that and will not take notice of anyone unless they particularly address her and then she will condescend to accept a guinea or so to keep her from starving. And I met another of the Popular Paupers, this fellow is the most expert and practis'd of any you ever imagined, he is one of the most celebrated characters of the age and when he dies he may, for aught I know, claim a place in Westminster Abbey, he will be the hero of all the wonderful magazines, excentric biographies for a century after him, he has lost both of his legs, his knees are fasten'd on to a little sled and he wheels himself about. He never asks for charity, he sometimes extends his hat, but if you look at him not all the stoicism of philosophy can resist him, there is an irresistible demand upon your sensibility in his look, his eye turns towards you so full of eloquence, with such an imploring air, that the passion that is not moved by him is not human and were your purse strings in a Gordian knot he would unwind them, and this same fellow — who every day takes his stand amidst the bustle of the City — a few months ago only he married one of his daughters with a portion of £7000, some say per annum, but I think it was enough to sound pretty well if it was *only* seven thousand pounds. I esteem myself quite fortunate in thus seeing two of the most celebrated characters of the day. I know no names for either of them, they are never mention'd but with their respective qualifications, so is there no name necessary. To give to the one is a tribute to Mrs. Siddons, and to the other is a tribute to Nature, who seems to have given this Pauper letters patent as her alms gatherer. But all the beggars about here are not so civil as these, some of the sturdy, healthy wretches will follow you a mile to extort a few pence from you and another to thank you for it. It is a great tax upon a person's feelings to pass thro the streets here, there are so many objects, miserable objects, and there are so many that it precludes the possibility of relieving them all, and to see them so miserable, a person of the least sensibility feels —<sup>1</sup>

January 10th, 1806. After the vast and splendid preparations the last obsequies have been render'd to the memory of Lord Nelson. The magnificence of this Triumphal Entrée surpass'd anything I had expected; two days have been entirely devoted to it. The first was to see the Aquatic Procession from Greenwich to Whitehall, this was entirely a novel scene to me. There was a solemnity in it if one

<sup>1</sup> A break in the ms.

had an inclination to keep in mind all the causes etc., but for me I was rather inclin'd to be amus'd with the gaiety of the barges, the elegance of their decorations, the bustle of the crowds of spectators. I was in an excellent situation at the Terrace and could see the whole of it from its passing the London Bridge to Westminster Bridge where it landed at Whitehall. The majestic movements of the procession were observ'd and lost a great deal of their effect from the innumerable boats which cover'd the Thames; the effect of the bands of musick which swell'd from the barges as they pass[ed] us was extremely grand, the humid air upon the water always softens the intonations of the musick, makes it a much sweeter harmony, the voices of the people assembled on the Rivage mingled with the air almost melodized it; the air of *allégresse* diffused around inspir'd a gaiety in ev'ry one, ev'ry one was animated — they might have been vastly sorry for the death of Lord Nelson but Ev'ry Englishman is fond of a show and like John Bull I must confess my passion for them. The prettiest thing that I saw was the Lord Mayor's barge all gold and ribbons. I do think the Lord Mayor the most enviable man in England, for his is the only one except the Livery Servants and the Beadles who have any pretensions to dress. I wonder what the Noblesse of a former Century would say if they were to return and behold all the gaudy trappings of gold and tinsel of which they were once so proud upon the shoulders of a saucy footman and to behold the Noble Blood which they have transmitted to posterity wrapt in the common drapery of their modest *laquais*. The modern livery is a coat of crimson, orange or any fancy colour, a bulwark of nine or ten capes fringed with deep gold or silver lace that reaches the coach box, thus engarrison'd is discover'd the diminutive coachman almost accablée'd with weight of his blushing honours, nor would he be discover'd but that his head is elevated above all this in order to support an immense cock'd hat that gives the idea of the cloud capt Towers. These also are fringed with a lace about a quarter of a yard deep. Behind the carriage are mounted three impudent footmen similarly caparison'd except their hats *en militaire*: as they would interfere with each other were they in the same sober angle as the *avant courier*, they have but two points, those extending in a parallel direction to accommodate each other, and thus is Hyde Park decorated ev'ry fair Sunday and when they are in motion it resembles very much a "Flying Camp" with every one a tent upon his shoulders, indeed the only sure way in London to awaken the languid voice of fame is to try who may be more ridiculous than their neighbours. This late fashion has succeeded wonderfully. All the candidates for notoriety have thus equip'd themselves Fashion will continue it until every fool has extravagantly

adopted it and then she will laugh at them with some greater extravagance which every one cannot attain. As to being in fashion in London it is out of the question, what is in one day is out the next, if you are at the very summit of Bond Street to-day to-morrow some one will rival you with a new invention, and what every one has seen no one admires, for unless it has the effect of surprise it is ridiculed as *outré* and antique. No one pretends to be fashionable more than one day at most, every fool must have his turn, indeed it would be cruel if it were not so, so many are there whose whole existence (at least fashionable existence) depends upon it. I think that you would call this in poetry an Episode, for I think I was saying something about the Funeral of Nelson; but I conceive my Episode as excusable, not being wholly unconnected with the funeral procession, for these same gay liveries formed one of the gayest and most diverting departments of it. But I should not speak thus lightly on this solemn occasion, for indeed it is one of the grandest and most noble scenes I ever witness'd. The car on which the coffin was borne was extremely magnificent, the first artists of the Kingdom were employ'd in its invention, but I will not attempt the description as you will undoubtedly behold it much more ably portray'd in the accounts which fill all the public prints and will reach America perhaps before this. I was very fortunately situated in Fleet Street, so near Temple Bar as to see the junction of the Mayor and the City procession with that from the admiralty and the while that we were awaiting its arrival I was amused at the manoeuvres of the mob who had assembled in the streets. We were oblig'd to be up before light and to get our stations, as by the rising of the sun the streets were impassable for the crowd. As no carriages were allow'd to pass after two o'clock in the night we were obliged to walk from the Adelphi thro the Strand to Fleet Street and I think I had a little sample of what the mob *was* to be. I know I was never so happy as when Temple Bar was in view, I was apprehensive of being crush'd to death. The streets were all cover'd with a kind of sand in order to give a solemnity and stillness to the procession and I think it had its effect. We lost the ceremony at St. Paul's by not being within, but we should have entirely lost seeing the procession without, which was by far the gayest and most important and besides St. Paul's has been open ever since for a "*show*" where we have been to see all the decoration etc. The coffin is yet uncover'd, it lies in the grave, but they will not yet cover it lest they should lose the immense sums which are daily paid them for the sight; indeed this funeral has almost made the fortune of many of the inhabitants of Strand, Fleet St., White Hall and Ludgate Hill, etc. They all let their houses or rooms at an enormous price. One of them offer'd

seats in his house for ten guineas and another having a little more conscience informed his countrymen that "he thought it extremely unjust that the price of seats should be so high as to prevent those who could not pay so much from seeing, but that he in pure benevolence and public spirit would accommodate some Gents and Ladies at the mere trifle of five guineas a seat." The Duchess of Devonshire is said to have given forty or fifty guineas for a house for this day. This same Duchess is the original of the Lady Delacour in Maria Edgeworth's favorite novel of *Belinda*, and I think my friend Eloise will not read this novel with less interest when she knows that Clarence Hervey was the late Duke of Bedford in whom she has been so much interested, the matchmaking Aunt, the Duchess of Gordon, who goes here by the name of the "Match-making Duchess," and Belinda is Lady Georgina, her daughter, the present Duchess of Bedford, allow'd to be the most beautiful woman in England. I forgot to ask who was the odious "Mrs. Luttrige." You have partly read the novel and should you finish it may read it with more interest knowing that the characters are from real life. . . .

There is no justice or reason in these *Anglois*. Last evening I intended to have been very much amused at the representation of a new comedy at Covent Garden, but it was preordained for me to be disappointed. A party of beaux were assembled there for the sport of what is called *damning the Play*. They scarcely permitted the two first acts to be quietly finished when they commenced their operations, those who were unprejudiced attempted to support it, but the rioters soon overpower'd them and they were obliged to resign their attempts to patronize a very promising play. There is something very repugnant to my feelings to see these poor players hissed off the stage and I think unless there is something very offensive that it is even cruel, their support is so very precarious, their pleasure as transient as animating, 'tis hard to rob them of it. The noise of the audience, the confusion of the actors, the clashing of hissing and applauding form a very amusing scene for many but for my part I would rather be content to permit a bad play to have its course and soberly go to sleep at its insipidity than to be kept so terribly awake by such an ungovern'd riot; in order to be able to have any correctness in one's opinion it is necessary to judge for oneself. Everything here is carried by party or by favour, to judge from common bruit is to be more in error than to be entirely ignorant. There was an amusing circumstance happen'd a little while ago which will serve to show you what dependence you may place upon the opinions in circulation. A new play was announced at I think Covent Garden and as there is the jealousy of rivalry sub-

sisting between that and Drury Lane, the opponents had prepar'd the severest critiques beforehand on the intended representation of the play. The newspaper in which it was to appear came out early in the morning therefore they were obliged to print the paper before the finishing of the play and they had, without being witness to its representation, prepar'd the severest strictures upon ev'ry character, the very actors were personally criticized, their attitudes ridiculed, their tones were corrected and their whole performance pronounc'd languid and absurd; but it, unfortunately for them, happen'd that one of the principal characters, one whom they had the most libel'd, was taken sick and the play obliged to be postponed, but it was too late known to the printers, they could not erase it from the papers, nor could they prevent their circulation, but were obliged to display before the diverted public their, what they had entitled, "Impartial Strictures."

We have left the Adelphi and reside now at No. 49 Bernard Street, Russell Square. This situation is very pleasant, the street passes directly from Brunswick Square to Russell Sq., our house is the last in the street and is almost in Russell Square, which forms a most delightful prospect from our windows. This is one of the largest and newest squares in London or rather Westminster, as the mere city is the smallest part of what is called London. All this part of London is lately built and has a very fine appearance, it is more modern than the older squares, the houses are not built so large as those in Grosvenor but are more compact, which ornaments the place, but I think separately considered they are not equal. It is astonishing that such an immense place as this is increases as much in proportion as Boston has lately, so you may judge by the new buildings, especially at West Boston, how London must spread; its environs for many miles around assume the appearance of a Town, the Villages are now almost joined by the chain of new houses which extend so far and so fast that upon a moderate calculation in six or seven years London will be completely covered for the space of twelve miles. . . .

I was last evening at a party at Mrs. Guests given for her children in honour of the twelfth night, the company mostly consisted of children, but some of them young ladies; one of them, a Miss Fox, played on the harp. She was a great proficient in musick, how sincerely did I breathe the wish that you were there. I have never in my life been so delighted as with her musick. She is one of the most interesting girls I have ever seen. She was beautiful, all sensibility and perfectly accomplished, what could have been wished more, her voice was extremely sweet and under the guidance of Verrara had attain'd a correctness and purity truly excellent. She

played with so much delicacy and expression, a retiring timidity rendered more interesting even the melody of her notes. How much I wished you had been there, you have a soul for harmony, how we could have enjoyed it. I feel it sufficiently proved that I am not wholly a selfish being since in all my pleasures there is a reserve — I cannot enjoy but half a pleasure which you do not partake. I feel very anxious to begin my lessons on the harp but have not yet been able to determine what master to have. There are several very eminent here but they have all a peculiar style which varies so very much that 'tis difficult to determine which to adopt. I feel as if I were wasting my time, these moments which I should employ in qualifying myself for your society and your affection — 'tis my aim, if I fail it will be owing to the *oisiveté* which I have of late insensibly yielded to, this indolence deadens the vivacity of *mon esprit*. I want something to inspire me, to animate me, there is every advantage I can wish for here but I doubt if they will ever be of advantage to me. I shall be always too much unsettled here to pursue anything rationally and my stay will not be long enough for an education — two years and tho long to — . . .

I had the pleasure of meeting the celebrated Mrs. Opie<sup>1</sup> at a splendid ball at Mrs. Barnard's in Finsbury Square. I was delighted with being in company with a woman in whom I have so often been interested. You have undoubtedly admired in the course of your readings the little novel of the *Father and Daughter*.<sup>2</sup> I remember well the unexpected delight I received at my first perusal of it — it is near four years since — one gloomy winter's night, I was at home solitary, the family were out and my Eloise came to spend the night with me, and for want of better amusement we sent to the Library for a book and our good stars directed this; we had never heard its merits mention'd and therefore approved it from better motives than common bruit, the sensibility, the pathos in which it was written delighted and affected us, the delicacy of sentiment, the purity of the style unusually interested us. I think I never perused a novel with more genuine satisfaction and emotion in my life, the vigils of that night were insensible and unnoticed. I shall never forget the first pleasure I received from this simple tale; we have since often mentioned it with delight and I never hear the name of Mrs. Opie or her writings mentioned without a glow of that pleasure I had once felt from her. I dare say Eloise remembers the enthusiasm with which we thought and spoke of her. I have since met with several celebrated little poems and poetical effusions of

<sup>1</sup> Amelia (Alderson) Opie (1769-1853), wife of John Opie, painter.

<sup>2</sup> Published in 1801.

hers and had drawn from them a conclusion not very unfavourable to the mind or the heart of the fair authoress. Do you Anna get by heart those stanzas of "Forget me not" by Mrs. Opie, if you do not already know them. Her style is very much what you admire, all sweetness, sensibility and harmony. Think with what delight I must have met this interesting woman. When she was at first introduced to me I did not distinctly hear her name, but afterwards enquir'd "who was that elegant woman, she who was so distinguished by her beauty, taste, etc." It was Mrs. Opie. What Mrs. Opie? then followed the explanation of her talents, fame, etc. She is as beautiful as wise, as wise as interesting, and as — but I dare say you have formed a just opinion already of her; but you have never seen her picture and I will give it to you. She has a soft but animated eye, full of sweetness and expression, like her own poetry, her complexion as soft as her eyes, "'twas beauty truly blent," her lips, like those — but I will not flatter her, and *sa belle chevelure*, how much I was indebted to that *belle chevelure*, it loosened in the dance and fell luxuriantly about upon her shoulders, the light brown hair as it slightly shaded the snowy whiteness of her neck gave her so wild an air, as tho in the very extasy of inspiration. I was next her and offered my fair hands to repair the accident and received in return the sweetest smile that ever played around her lips and throughout the evening I essayed all my coquetry to attract her attention, nor did I fail, tho I had no opportunity to converse in a ball room, and with a stranger but a soft beam from her eye, a smile, was enough. I should have sat beside her at supper but for an odious partner of mine, he would not permit two ladies to sit together. She retired directly after supper and I knew not till then that I was tired to death, that the rooms were intolerably hot, etc. I attempted to dance afterwards but was obliged to leave my partner, break my engagements, go home and go to sleep. I caught a most violent cold. I suppose from being overheated. . . .<sup>1</sup> Stanzas "Forget-me-not," and I believe had it not been for [ ] I should have been much more reasonable in my admiration. The idea of rivalry mutually incited us and it appeared to be the endeavour of each which should be the most extravagant. I cannot give you anything very descriptive of this ball as I did not trouble myself with the rest of the company except Mrs. Opie, tho there were a great many elegantes, dashing beaux etc. and the musick of the harp (which is now the fashionable instrument to dance by) it seemed to inspire every one and as I only dance by inspiration I could not want for animation. The atmosphere of a ball room seems always

<sup>1</sup> The ms. is incomplete.

congenial to my feelings and not mine only, for I have known many a cold heart thaw'd by dancing that ne'er before had known a genial warmth — am I not indebted to the dance for melting you to *mon amour*?

We have had a very pleasant party today. Mrs. Guest dined with us and brought with her Mrs. Knowles,<sup>1</sup> of whom you have undoubtedly heard as ranked amongst the literary characters of the age, as well as the most accomplished. She is now near seventy years of age and still retains all the vivacity and intelligence of youth. I was extremely delighted with her, her conversation is peculiarly entertaining and there is an energy of expression, or as I may say an aptness characteristic. I was not aware of the nature of our guest, not having any previous acquaintance with her until my friend Mrs. Guest introduced her. I was attracted unwitting to observe the superiority of her conversation. She gave me an account of a visit to Scotland formerly. She knew the literary characters of time which we think quite passed by. She observed the ladies of the former day very different from the present effeminate race, they were what she termed "executive" and I admired the originality and the aptness of the expression which conveys forcibly the peculiar meaning, and I know of no other which conveys so correct a meaning. Mrs. Knowles is a Quaker, tho a very different one from those I have generally seen. She has all the liberality of a *Christian* and all the simplicity of a *Quaker*. I understand she is an excellent painter, and possesses a great deal of taste withal. She has been very much celebrated for the perfection which she has attained in embroidery, so much so that the King requested her to work his picture, which she did and it is now one of the curiosities of the Palace. She has been formerly a great deal at Court where she was a great favorite of the Royal Family and her talents and accomplishments procured her distinction. She is now too old to support the fatigues of etiquette of the Drawing Room and I believe has not been this several years. I expect to derive a great deal of pleasure in viewing her collection of paintings, etc. How interesting is it to behold age without its deformities, it almost reconciles to the loss of the lively blush of Youth, the fair complexion and the form of symmetry, to behold Age, not as the ruins of Beauty, but the Maturity of Wisdom, to see it not as a wither'd blossom but the rich fruit the buds of Spring had promised; when the restlessness of youth is only changed for the peevishness of Age, how disgusting — but who can behold without admiration or without interest the mild declining of a life of virtue, to see the fire of Youth yield to a soft and peaceful

<sup>1</sup> Mary (Morris) Knowles (1733-1807), wife of Dr. Thomas Knowles.



serenity, the eye has not forgot to sparkle, but beams content and cheerfulness, the features retain more of expression than animation, they have attained a character which suffices, for there is nothing terrible in age were age always thus, but reverse the picture and what is life after thirty! The rest of our party was composed of Mr. and Mrs. McIlwham from Scotland. They are newly married and have come according to fashion to pass the honey moon in London. He is (or was) an old bachelor of about fifty and she about twenty. He had an immense fortune and she had beauty, so as it was a fair bargain she gave him a note of hand, signed the bond and I dare say is pleased with her speculation. The lover settles four thousands pounds a year and a carriage upon his mistress and brings her to London, which was certainly a very seducing advantage for one who has but beauty to deal withal and beauty is not a scarce article in this country. From the circumstances of Mrs. McIlwham's marriage I did not expect to see anything more than beauty and that not of *my kind*, but I was surprised to find her agreeable, polite and well educated, she is a true Scotch lass, speaks in the Highland style, there is something peculiarly interesting in it. She told me a great deal about the curiosities and antiquities of Scotland and tells me that the poems of your favorite Ossian are only a forgery which the vanity of the author did not deny at his death — this, tho it does not advance anything against the merits of the work but rather in favor may prejudice you. But I should be angry to see your taste so fickle as to desert your favorite because he had agreeably deceived you, for my —

I was last evening at the new opera of *Argenide e Serse*<sup>1</sup> in which Mrs. Billington<sup>2</sup> and Braham<sup>3</sup> were the principal characters, to say I was delighted would but faintly express my admiration. Delight is a sensation I have so often yielded to at more trivial pleasures it would but convey a dull sense of my enjoyment. We have so few operas in our language that you may not perhaps understand the style of these divertisements. The *Rosamond* of Addison<sup>4</sup> tho a burlesque is most in the style of the Italian. The sentiments are exprest in poetry and the voice accompanies the recitation and is allowed to play at pleasure on all the sentiments and expressions throughout the piece. The fable of the opera was taken from history. Serse, Mr. Braham, is betrothed to *Argenide*, the Princess of the Parthians. His son *Sebastes* (*Signor Righi*) is his rival.

<sup>1</sup> Music by Portogallo and first produced in 1806, at the King's Theatre in the Haymarket.

<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth Billington (1768-1818).

<sup>3</sup> John Braham (1774?-1856).

<sup>4</sup> "Fair Rosamond," an opera in three acts, published anonymously in 1707.

Serse, or Xerxes, in a battle is conquered, his fleet destroyed, and himself said to be lost in the waves of the Euxine; the report reaching home, Sebastes is elected King, and claims Argenide (Mrs Billington) for his Queen. Xerxes is informed of these movements by Barsene whom Sebastes was to have married, and she in jealousy and revenge aggravates the guilt of Sebastes to his father. It seems that one of her minions by her directions circulated the report of the death of Xerxes in order to ensnare them in her plots and excite the revenge of the father, who, when they are at the Temple in order to celebrate at once the nuptials and coronation, he enters, thro a *fentiero* and surprises them. *Les jeunes amants* however deceive him. Argenide renews her *serments de fidélité* to Xerxes, whilst at the same time she makes an appointment to meet Sebastes in an obscure cavern in the Reali Giardini. This appointment is overheard by Barsene, who informs the King of it. Xerxes seeks them in the Giardini, surprises them and dooms his son to death, which is seemingly obeyed, but by the influence of Meraspes (Rovedino), the grand papa, he is saved and concealed. After the first gust of passion has past Xerxes relents, and when the tromba announces the death of his son, all the father rushes on his soul. His despair, his agony plead so well the pardon of his son that when he is again introduced alive the enraptured father sacrifices his mistress and unites her to the resuscitated son. There are many fine scenes drawn from this story, tho it cannot boast much of the elegance of design the colouring was very fine, the shading of passion was well arranged. The first idea that strikes is that this is unnatural to hear one under the influence of violent passion, warbling in sweet quavers the frenzied agonies of jealousy, revenge, etc.; or when the tongue would give utterance to the sweet passion love, that he should time it to the soft measure of Lydian numbers; but as melodie is the refinement of the voice, and this voice is the gift of nature, and were we to rest content as when we first discovered it, we should not even attain speech or language. As language is the second grade of refinement, so musick exceeds that. They are both latent powers which we possess from nature which need only to be developed to display its perfection. Nature is more perfect than we believe her, and simplicity is only an imperfection of our constitution or a want of energy. I am inclined to believe that Nature would never own all the imperfections placed to her account, and what we art call she would claim as a *denouvellement* of her powers. You see I have thrown the gauntlet of disputation; how sad it is to have no one who will even contradict me, me, who am so impassonné with disputation. Like many other passions this, mine for contest grows faint and languid for want of opposition. So as I can have no opponent I must draw

my own conclusions. Thus Nature gives us a voice to use in whatever perfection we can attain, and as melody is that perfection, so should all our future converse be softened into harmony. We should introduce in all the intercourse which we have with one another the soft movements of piano, the vivacious allegro should regulate the tones the very meanings of our conversation. It would be simple enough to teach the child who first begins the soft and imperfect accents to tone the word as well in Fa as in Si. Methinks it is even one of the vestiges of barbarism of savageness to retain the unmelodized tones in which we now converse. How sweet it would be to have everyone, instead of using the unmellow and unmusical, to set all our sentiments to an opera tune, what a world of harmony would this be. Let us, I say, have it reduced to a system to the entire exclusion of the present barbarous custom: "let the sound be an echo to the sense;" let the loud laugh be exchanged for an Italian trill, and the soft sigh be breathed in a fine intonation, and all the common intercourse of life be in the recitative. How I should love to hear your soft voice warbling the sweet sounds "Io amovi, Idolo mio," etc. Would you not think this system a very rational one? At least, it would so harmonize the universe; and had you heard a Billington sing, you would wonder that ever the world had remained so long without adopting it. To give you an idea of her voice would be impossible, and yet I would you could conceive of it. With all its compass it possesses a sweetness a compass that passes imagination, and when it does "glance from earth to heaven," it seems to fill the space; no chasm for even Fancy to fill up. And when it reaches Heaven, it sports as light as a summer zephyr. If you can connect the idea of sound and light mingling the two senses, I would tell you that her voice sparkled. Have you not seen the majestick rocket that swims along the bosom of the night and mounts to Heaven, and spreads a brilliant bow across the skies, then bursts and scatters from it a thousand sparks, that play and glitter amongst the stars and seemed to almost eclipse their lustre? So did her voice, as it sailed along the air, the very winds enamoured seemed dissolved lest they should intercept its pass. It breathed so sweet of Heaven, that not a sense but arrested its motion to attend, scarce did a rebel respiration intrude to divert the attention. Braham, the next in melody, possessed a voice of compass and of sweetness; it was the only one that seemed formed to mingle with that of Mrs. Billington. One duetto between them received a third encore, twice it was repeated, and oh such musick. I remember three soft notes which I have heard in Darley's<sup>1</sup> voice

<sup>1</sup> John Darley, Sr. or Jr. Seilhamer, III. 137.

that bore a resemblance to Braham's, but only those three that even bore comparison. Righi was sometimes very fine. He possesses power and sweetness in his tones; and as an accompaniment to Mrs. Billington was admired, but for a comparison he is nothing. Rovedino has an astonishing, full and deep voice, but it has something so sepulchral in it that it almost frightened me. Signora Columbati took one of the principal characters, but they never allow any but the second rate to appear with Mrs. Billington (except Braham). She was the greatest bore upon a delicate ear in the world; they began to hiss her, but the poor creature was so much pitied, or the audience were in such good humour at the successful exertions of Mrs. Billington that they pardoned her and dismissed her with a clap, tho' every one wished it had been upon her ear. I was in an agony for the poor creature. I can never bear to behold them hissed from the stage, their dependence is so precarious, their transient pleasures so on the caprices of the audience and their resources so terrible, for they can hardly sink lower, that from my heart I pity them. Mr. Shaw,<sup>1</sup> who was with us, suggested the idea that we had best make a subscription for her and set her up as a milliner, and so rid the stage of her. I was diverted with the idea and wish they would institute a Magdalen for all the shocking actresses who infest our stage. Mrs. Billington is a fine stately woman. She is what we call *embonpoint*, but she has such a commanding air that it seems to give *weight* to her character. Her face is very handsome, a fine blue eye, sweet mouth, etc., etc. Half that makes these actresses appear so beautiful is their dress. Mrs. B——'s was blue and silver, which displayed so much taste that I could easily when she sung have imagined her a seraph. Between the acts of the opera was an interlude of dancing, in which they introduced a young creature who first made claims to the public smiles. She was a fine dancer but appeared not enough practiced or that she used too much exertion. I do not know her name. The ballet was the favorite new piece of "La Surprise de Diane ou Le Triomphe de l'Amour." This inimitable little piece is from a fable in mythology. Diana and her nymphs are discovered (when the scene first opens) arranged in groups amongst the trees weaving garlands of flowers. This scene is exquisitely imagined, the distant figures all in motion seen thro the opening vistas, the light and sylphlike forms represent the fabled driads of old. Diana is the celebrated I—— and her favorite nymph Mad'llie Parrisot. Whilst they are thus employed one of the nymphs enters hastily and informs them of a stag just

<sup>1</sup> Robert Gould Shaw (1776-1853), who was in England from 1805 to 1807. In 1809 he married Elizabeth Willard Parkman (1785-1853), daughter of Samuel Parkman of Boston.

started and they prepare for the chase. They seize their spears and pursue the game, and are led thro several scenes to give effect, and the stags are introduced very naturally flying before them. After a long chase they are joined by a party of shepherds in pursuit of the same stag, and they mingle in the troop of nymphs; and as the creature passes they throw their spears. Diana reaches him and he expires. The shepherds bring [him] to Diana and make an offering to her, who receives it very courteously, but separates her nymphs from them and retires. The soft persuasion and blandishments of one of the shepherds after some hesitation and timidity prevails on one of the nymphs (Parrisot) to remain with him, who after a little wooing seats herself with him upon a little turf and listens to his tale. Diana missing her favorite seeks her and surprises her with her *amant*. The nymph abashed and confounded implores her forgiveness. Diana is inexorable, not all her tears or prayers can soften her. She throws her from her with disdain and horror, and dismisses her from her train. (You must remember this is all pantomime accompanied with dancing and the expressions all attitude.) The piece is varied with several meetings of the shepherds and nymphs who attempt to join the train, but Diana repulses them with anger. The nymph thus driven from her wanders a long time disconsolate, then throws herself in despair upon the *gazon*. Cupid enters, little Md'lle Bristow was Love, this little creature does not appear more than seven years and is yet one of the most exquisite dancers I ever saw. She is all grace, as light as air, as beautiful as an angel. She seems to have such a perfect command of limbs; her attitude is so expressive, I was delighted with her. She is one of the most favorite dancers on the opera. As I was saying, Cupid enters, raises her and consoles her and declares revenge to Diana who has then treated him with so much *méprision*. The scene is the most beautiful moonlight in order to give effect to the piece. Endymion (M. Deshayes) enters with the shepherds, and after a thousand little expressive trifles he forsakes the band and seats himself upon the *gazon*, breathes a few soft notes upon the pipe, then sleeps. Whilst he sleeps Diana appears upon a car of clouds; she descends and wanders around, sees Endymion, stops with curiosity to gaze at him. In this *moment de danger* Love upon tiptoe watches the time and wounds them both. Endymion starts from his slumbers unconscious what his pain. He beholds the Goddess and knows 'tis love; all the soul of attitude and eyes implore her compassion. She repulses him with horror but cannot fly, she regards him, *tout aimable qu'il est*; she would be angry but in spite of herself relents. Love, as he would facilitate the conquest, leads her to him and when she retreats leads her half reluctant, half relenting back,

and after struggling unavailingly she places the expressive finger on her lips. Endymion swears inviolable silence, the winds are hushed lest they might betray, the conscious moon half veils herself in a cloud and as Diana reclines upon Endymion's shoulder, Love seeks the nymph who had been contemned and makes her witness of the scene, then with his touch [the] scene fades away and the laughing gods witness the scene from High Olympus. This last scene has a most admirable effect, the Court of Jove, with all his train of gods and goddesses appear, the nymphs and shepherds mingle in the frolic dance and Diana, no longer concealing her passion, places Endymion beside her on her car and they ascend to Heaven. The exquisite dancing, the attitude of Deshayes were *trop dangereux*. The grace, the attitude of Parrisot were enough to turn a heavier head than mine. I know not which to admire most Mad'me Deshayes or Parrisot. Mad'me Deshayes was the most consistent in her motion, she was extremely beautiful, her face was infinitely superior to Parrisot, but Parrisot's attitude and form surpassed all. Her face did not belong to so fair a form, and had it been as beautiful I should have imagined I had beheld my Anna Lothrop; her attitude strangely reminded me, her sylph-like form that turned slightly back with such inimitable grace, I might have been well deceived; the same dress almost that I remember at the Cambridge Ball, the simple drapery of green and white was the same. I could not see this resemblance without emotion. I could very willingly have cried myself to sleep or could have sprung upon the stage and embraced her as my friend, or any other silly movement that impulse often prompts me to. It is most astonishing to me how they can attain such a command of their limbs, their feet bear them along so lightly as they seem scarce to touch the ground, the motion is so rapid that it almost makes one dizzy to behold them. And yet they maintain such grace, such ease, it is not perceived they make the least exertion. Mad'me Deshayes is also *embonpoint*, but she springs with the air of a zephyr. She is extremely well-formed for so large a woman. I have been amusing myself with the idea of what you sober, decent beings in Boston, should either Deshayes or inimitable Parrisot appear upon the stage, the extravagance of attitude, the passionate gestures which they use, those *trop* expressive gestures, tho I cannot approve of the style entirely, I cannot but laugh at [the] consternation in which you would all be put. Poor Labottière attempted this style and put all the ladies to the blush at the opera. I hardly dared to confess to myself the apprehension I suffered in many of their most affecting scenes. Mons. Deshayes is the most perfect master of attitude and expressive movement. I could have almost preferred the silent and expressive eloquence of the pan-

tomime to that of the drama. It seems to set in motion all the machinery of fancy, and who is not fond of discovery and is not more pleased that they have found out something too deep for others? It is a kind of compliment paid to the imagination not to descend to explanation but leave it to their *dénouement*. The Opera House is much more splendidly ornamented than Drury Lane Theatre, but I do not admire it so much nor think it so elegant tho more gay. There is a great deal of gilding about it and a great deal of painting, but I thought not with so much taste. The boxes are entirely parted from each other by thick partitions. They are all of them private property and no one has a right to enter them more than a private house, they all generally take upon a lease, some of ten years, fifteen, and some for life, so that strangers, unless they have acquaintance with some of the possessors, are obliged to sit in the pit, which is by far the best place unless the front boxes, because in the side rows only three in front can see the stage, the partition being in the way of the others. In their boxes they feel as much at home as in their houses. The most fashionable generally talk and laugh so loud that they disturb the whole audience which is a source of infinite sport and delight to them. It is a fine sight to see the beauty and elegance of the English women at the Opera, they can nowhere be seen to so much advantage, every one appears there in full dress and displays as much taste and expense as possible. I have always observed that where there is a large assemblage of ladies they appear to a disadvantage, too much beauty cloy; but here there seemed to be an uniformity of beauty, a characteristic trait of elegance throughout the house, almost every one was beautiful and almost every one had a peculiar attraction. The English, take them as a nation, are extremely handsome, the men are generally elegant and the women beautiful. We were very much disturbed in the midst of the opera by the entrance of the Prince of Wales and Mr. Sheridan, they always attract particular notice. The Prince is known by his beauty and Mr. Sheridan by his great red nose! à la Tom Paine. I had a fine opportunity of seeing the Prince as he bent forward for a long time to converse with a gentleman in the pit. He is very elegant but is growing very *embonpoint* and I think that all the great characters of the age are rather inclined thus. Genius is no longer starved but fattens upon the smiles of fools, and is fostered from starvation into comfort. So will this century of 1800 be one of the most flourishing most brilliant the world has known — at least it should be so, and thus I might have run on this year had I continued to say all the silly things that come into my head. I perceive how this idle habit grows upon me (of writing to you) for when I begin I go on in a mechanical movement, something like one of the

Orphean Band who used to play for us at the Assembly last winter. I have seen the fellow asleep over his drum, but his hand would still continue the languid movement of time with the rest, it had become so natural with him that even when asleep his hand continued the same movement. I think there is at least a resemblance.

I have had the pleasure of passing an evening with Mrs. Knowles at her house and have been truly delighted. Her house is highly decorated with her own labours, her paintings and her work. I had never conceived it possible to arrive at such perfection in embroidery as she has attained. She showed to us one piece in particular, it was her own picture working the King (as I suppose she thinks that the most honorary event in her life she has chosen to commemorate it). The likeness is extremely striking, tho taken several years since, yet her features bold and expressive are the same as ever. It resembles the most delicate piece of painting, the colours, the shades are so admirably blended that unless you were told it or examined it, it would be impossible to know it from paint and what is more astonishing it is done with worsted or crewel instead of silk. There are no traces of the needle, the shades are mingled with as much softness and harmony as possible, the eye is full of expression, the tints of the complexion inconceivably delicate. It was necessary to be a painter before she could understand the arrangement of her colours. I believe this and the King are the only figures she ever attempted. Her paintings are confined to landscapes and to fruit, in which she is indeed excellent. West has said that her grapes are the best painted in England and she has painted a great many fruit pieces which embellish her rooms—hers is the only fruit I have seen worth admiring since I have been in England. Her pineapples seem to shed a most delicious juice and her grapes are perfectly transparent. Her landscapes are remarkable for the delicacy of the painting and the simplicity and nature of their design. She has a most elegant cabinet of her own painting, at least the tablets are her own painting, the frame is prepared of a kind of lackar'd mingled with gold, the tablets were left plain for her own painting. It is a fashion here for ladies who excel at the brush to have them prepared before hand and ornament them with their own skill. The tablets were landscapes and extremely well painted. Mrs. K. has worked many fine pieces of game and birds. There was one piece of two birds reckoned extremely fine; there are several of the real feathers of the bird which are not distinguished from her imitations. These would be nothing were it not for the perfection to which she has brought this work.<sup>1</sup> She seems indeed

<sup>1</sup> See Boswell, *Johnson* (Hill), III. 299.



to excel in almost everything, her genius is universal, she is as learned as accomplished, things which are seldom found united. I have been very much pleased with her, the more I see her the more I admire her. Her manners are more polished than we usually find in a Literary, all that was literary in her appearance was a cap *en littéraire*, but you know one must have something to be distinguished, some badge of character.

The Foundling Hospital is the most fashionable resort for a Sunday evening, every one assembles to listen to the most delightful musick in the world. It is not in the style of church musick excepting that it is affecting and impressive, the style is more of the opera, indeed it is generally called the Sunday opera. It is a point of taste to attend on Sunday evening and to be delighted with the musick. It is surely a harmless pastime for those who would most undoubtedly spend it worse. They take great pains to render their choir complete and they indeed possess one most superior. We live very near it and have an [opportunity] of going there very often. I shall not attempt to describe this admirable institution which everyone is acquainted with, and indeed everything in London is so well known with you here that it would be ridiculous to attempt to describe half what I see, and I do not suppose you will ever take the pains to read half what I write so it does not avail if I write nonsense or not. These pages are like a sett of Blackguards, not one of them would have the impudence to appear alone, but they crowd together and conceal each other's faults or support each other by appearing reciprocally bad, not one but would blush to be examined apart, but as they all hustle together the judge, weary of an unavailing scrutiny, send[s] them all off together as incorrigible — a very fine simile, it is not? Confess it an apt one. . . .

I have to tell you that I have seen Mrs. Siddons. This is a kind of catastrophe in one's life that deserves commemoration. I have seen her, but to describe, 'tis impossible. I who have exhausted my fires upon common objects, how shall I animate enough my description of this constellation, this — but every one calls names so I'll be civil — the noble, the impressive dignity of her gesture, her air, her voice are — Mrs. Siddons. Mrs. Siddons alone compares with Mrs. Siddons, anything else would but diminish her merit. The character of Mrs. Beverly is extremely suited to her, pathos and sensibility are always her *fort*, she seems to enter in the very spirit of the passion, she feels what she expresses. The dignified Kemble was also upon the stage. But I cannot so fully as I wish, nor so fully as I am wont, or so fully as the subject deserves, speak of them, not for want of this prattling humour, but for want of time, as I shall thus state to you. I have six letters to write by the *Jno*.

*Adams*, six by the *Packet*, six by the *Sally*, six by the *Reunion*, seven by the *New Packet*, and the same number by the new and old *Galen* and a dozen more ships. I have been counting my fingers to reckon how many my number will be and I find my mathematics hardly extends so far. I shall, however, when I have finished these letters, give you a more particular account of the theatres and amusements here, for tho they may not be very interesting I conjecture they may be as much so as anything I can write. There has been only one masquerade since I have been here. I did not go because I knew of no one who would attend it and being strangers and not knowing the etiquette we have postponed it till the next which will be in about a week. Mr. Shaw (your friend) has been and is to be our chaperone the next time. The masquerades at the Pantheon are not generally so decorous as those at the Opera House and we therefore chuse to wait until there shall be another one there. I then should be — anything in the descriptive way I shall certainly be fool enough to write you of it. I shall depend upon your writing me an account of the dissipations of the winter, your balls, your routs, etc., etc.

Remarks were made during the meeting by Messrs. GREEN and WENDELL.